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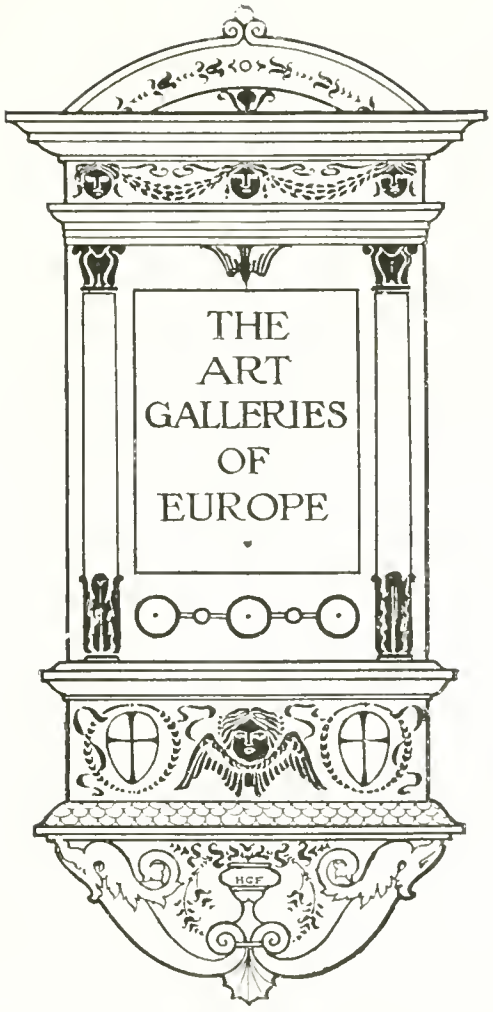

THE NATIONAL GALLERY
LONDON

THE DUTCH SCHOOL

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THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

THE DUTCH SCHOOL

BY GUSTAVE GEFFROY

I. BEFORE REMBRANDT

THE history of Dutch art may be divided into four parts:

Firstly, the study of the "Primitives," directly allied to the primitive Flemish artists, and often connected with the German "Primitives," with whom they also have kinship.

Secondly, the study of those artists who came after, and were influenced by Italian art.

Thirdly, the study of the national school, which broke away from all tradition, not alone that of the "Primitives,"—Flemish, German and Dutch—but of the Italians, and clearly revealed itself as springing from the soil, as arising out of surroundings, and customs, and the great historical events which had just come to pass.

And, lastly, the study of the decadence—of artists who fell into mannerisms and relapsed into the Italian style.

It is impossible to study the first period—that of the "Primitives"—in the National Gallery of London; and the cause of the absence of such works from the great English collection is easily explained. The works of the early Dutch painters, like nearly all "Primitive" work, consisted of representations of religious history, paintings which were designed for churches and convents, and thus did not pass from sale to sale, or from one collection to another. There are none of these works in the National Gallery, and very few indeed in the Louvre. To become acquainted with them—I mean to see them, for the work of classifying them is far from complete, and their identity often obscure—one must visit the

galleries and collections of Holland itself, especially the archiepiscopal museum at Utrecht, where may be seen an infinitely interesting collection of paintings, wood-carving, metal work, &c., everything in fact, in the way of religious art, and of the beginnings of art generally, that could be discovered and rescued in the Netherlands.

So London possesses no Dutch works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; neither Geerten von Saint-Jans nor Lucas de Leyde is represented. On the other hand, Jan Mostaert, who was born at Haarlem in 1474, and died in the same town some time after 1549, is to be seen in a *Virgin and Child in a Garden*. Jan van Scorel too (1495–1562), who was of those who introduced the Italian manner into Holland, after many years of travel, during which he visited not Rome and Vienna alone but Jerusalem, Rhodes and Germany. Judging by the works attributed to him Scorel would seem to have been an artist of supple and assimilative gifts. The greater part of his pictures are based on Italian and Eastern landscapes; and even when, returned and settled at Utrecht, he painted Dutch faces, he gave them an Italian *tournure* and expression, as one may see by his *Portrait of a Lady*, which is evidently reminiscent of Raphael.

The national art of Holland came into being after the great revolution which ended in the expulsion of the Spaniards, and established the independence of the Dutch States. The republic of the United Provinces was proclaimed, and in addition to the political revolution there was a revolution in religion—Catholicism being replaced by Protestantism. Quite logically an artistic revolution followed. Suddenly the civic life of the free man found artistic interpreters. No more ecclesiastical art. Henceforth it was the every-day life of all and sundry that was to be studied. The meetings of the civic guards, the assemblies of corporations, the gatherings of syndics, of managers and manageresses of hospitals and alms-houses—everything in fact which signified the defence, the administration, the precaution, the commerce, the riches of the land, from that day forth served to inspire the artist. Then, portraits and still more portraits. And then the peaceful life of the burgess in his home, with its well-regulated luxury, its musical and other diversions, its feastings, and at times its *scènes de galanterie*. Nor did the artist disdain peasant life amid rural landscapes, with its diversions of ale-house and card-able.

As with the productions of primitive art—ecclesiastical ornaments—it is but natural that the great works of the national Dutch School should still remain in Holland. The pictures of civic guards, and corporations and hospitals, and anatomy lessons stayed in the places for which they were made, and then, as a matter of course, took their positions by right in the Dutch galleries.

Foreign galleries possess a few portraits of this period. Here, for instance, is a *Portrait of a Lady*, by J. A. Ravesteijn, grave and thoughtful of aspect, the head covered by a black cap, and the shoulders by an

immense starched collar, over a black body. Like Ravesteijn, Frans Hals (1580–1666), while contemporary with Rembrandt, was also slightly his predecessor. Hals is quite himself here with two fine portraits. One is that of a man with moustache and flattened hair, keen glance, and mouth half-laughing. He is clothed in black, his neck enclosed in an enormous goffered collar. The painting is broad and silky, and slashed with light, and gives a good idea of Hals's sure and expeditious manner. The portrait of a woman, however, is the more important of the two, and shows the master hand more plainly. She is a buxom creature, with fairly refined features and well-oiled head. Her eyes are keen: she has a small mouth and a double chin. The crossed hands are finely painted, and the dark bodice, the full ruff, the indented wristbands, and the little white cap are done with all the artist's knowledge and adroitness.

The *Portrait of a Jesuit*, a correct composition by Willem van der Vliet (1584–1642), has not the same artistic interest. Gerard van Honthorst (1590–1656) may easily be surpassed as a painter of popular customs; at the same time one must be grateful to him for having painted with so much *bonhomie* this family of old peasants warming themselves. Dirk Hals, the date of whose birth is unknown, but who died in 1656, ten years before his brother Frans, shows himself to be a charming painter in his *Partie de Cavaliers et de Dames*, which has the *verve* of Frans Hals, and also, in places, a fluid colour after the manner of Rubens. Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen (1594–1664) is another of the portrait-painters who were so plentiful in Holland. Thomas de Keyser (1596–1667) was among those who most clearly perceived the picturesque in the popular, and he did excellent *portraits en action*, such as the *Marchand et son Commis*. The latter is handing a ticket to his master seated at a table, and both have the exact characteristics of their station—the calm authority of the master, the respectful alacrity of the clerk. Also one must mention the scenes, treated in somewhat dry and distorted fashion by Willem Cornelisz Duyster (1599–1635)—a quarrel among soldiers, and men playing backgammon. And lastly, before coming to Rembrandt, a *Family*, genially composed by Jan van Bylert (1603–1671).

II. REMBRANDT

Rembrandt van Ryn (1606–1669) is admirably represented in the National Gallery. But no matter where he may be found he always shines with the same singular lustre! Everywhere he gives proof of his genius—never scorning the humblest reality, ever manifesting life in the simplest, profoundest, most pathetic manner.

As his work was so was his life—illumined in parts, in others wrapt

in mysterious shadow. A few of the principal facts one knows, the rest is doubtful. The writings he left behind are quite unimportant. In the way of archival documents there are one or two legal papers relating to him, an inventory of his belongings, which at least throw some light on his tastes, and the thoughts that occupied his mind, and further certain narratives and anecdotes, more or less authentic, transmitted by his contemporaries. The truth is, none of those living at the same time, and in the same town with Rembrandt had any idea that they had among them a great artist, whose mind and life and sayings demanded to be understood and made known. Thus we do not even know his exact name with any certainty, nor the precise spot where he was born. Some believe his name was Paul, others hold a different opinion; some declare he was born in the outskirts of Leyden, others that he saw the light in that town itself. It is supposed that his father was a miller or the owner of a mill. No documents exist to show for certain that his teachers were Swanenburg, Lastman, Pinas and Schooten, or what was the social position of his first wife, Saskia Nylenburg. Did he marry a second time? And was it his servant, Hendrickie Stoffels? And was there yet another wife?

We know he lived till the age of twenty-two at Leyden; that he married Saskia in 1634; that she died in 1642; that he had four children, of whom one only Titus, lived beyond infancy, and that he was brought up by Hendrickie. We know too, that among his friends were citizens and high officials of the town of Amsterdam, where he took up his abode: the minister-preacher Jan Cornelisz; the art dealer, Pieterzôon Goôrner; the poet-secretary of the Stadtholder Constantin Huygens; the memnonite minister, Renier Anslo; Dr. Tulp, Professor of Anatomy; the burgomaster, Jan Six; the print collector, Abraham Franco; the goldsmith, Janus Lutina; the theologian, Manasseh ben Israël; the States-Receiver, Uijtenboogaerd, and the burgomaster, Corneille Witzen. Further it is supposed that public favour was withdrawn from him after the appearance of his picture of the *Sortie of Captain Cocq's Company* (known the world over as the *Ronde du Nuit*, or "Night-Watch"), in which, for the sake of the general effect, he dared to take certain liberties with the features of his models. Also the rich collectors among his friends would seem to have given him up to some extent; nevertheless, he was commissioned to paint the *Drapers' Syndics*, in 1661, and he did the portrait of Jan Six between 1656 and 1660.

Finally we know that Rembrandt buried his father Harmen Gerritsz, known as Van Ryn; his mother, Cornélie van Zuitbroeck; his wife Saskia, and their first three children, then his youngest son, Titus, and finally Hendrickie. His last years he lived in a room in the Rosengracht, and there he died, leaving nothing behind but his bed, his clothing and his painter's tools. One cannot repress a feeling of angry regret and bitterness when searching for Rembrandt's lodging places in Amsterdam, for in doing so one seems to see in the passers-by the same heedless crowd

that watched the coffin of the great neglected man borne away without so much as exclaiming, "Rembrandt is dead!"

But we are now in London, in the Halls of the National Gallery, and here we find our Rembrandt in fullest life and vigour.

Here we have Rembrandt's work and Rembrandt himself. First, the portrait of himself as a young man, signed and dated 1640. Thus he was thirty-three or thirty-four years of age at the time. It was six years after his marriage, and two years before the death of Saskia. He is dressed in perfect taste in the costume of a well-to-do burgess. His dress is a harmony in silk and velvet and furs, with a pleated chemisette and an embroidered collar. On his head a plumed cap, a mantle over his right arm. The face is youthful, placid, confident, prudent, and with a touch of childish candour remaining, if one examine carefully the mild, frank eyes, and the full and amiable mouth. This painting, which dates from about the same period as the *Night Watch*, has a masterly air, with Rembrandt's own blacks, those transparent blacks, full of colour and yet densely dark, and with the whole canvas illumined by the triple radiance of light from the face itself, the *chemisette*, and the hand resting on the ledge of a balustrade.

And here again we have *Rembrandt in Old Age*, less sad to the eye than the Louvre portrait of the same period. There is indeed weariness in the features, and with the years the grave and brilliant Rembrandt of the earlier picture has lost his comeliness. Here he wears a white *serre-tête*, or skull-cap, and a black cap whence his hair straggles loose. He is dressed in a loose coat with a well-worn fur collar, and we cannot repress a feeling of sadness at the visible senility and decadence of the great painter. The fact is, Rembrandt is one of those men whom we would have loved to meet amid the crowd of his fellows. His work makes us picture him great yet accessible, and on his features, which as a young man showed candour, we may now discern, amid the signs of age, profound humanity and infinite goodness.

The National Gallery has other and very fine portraits by Rembrandt, apart from those he painted of himself. All his styles are represented here—from his exact, precise manner, with its silvery lights, to his more broadly-executed method, which notes details while subjugating them to the general effect, under a golden light. In this *Old Lady* (1634) with her white head-dress and collar, her puffy flesh, her restless eyes and rather peevish mouth, he shows kinship with his predecessors, but it is evident that even then he possessed a gift of observation and an energy all his own. Further, he belongs to his own national school in his *Portrait of a Man* (1635)—a horseman with a gold chain and a wide lace-bordered collar.

Another *Portrait of a Man* (1659) is not one of the great works of his second manner, nor is the *Capucin Brother*. These are paintings in which the reflection and the power of the artist are not displayed with that clear evidence which shines forth from those other three portraits: a *Rabbi*, of sad and pensive countenance: the *Burgomaster*, a lean old man rapidly

and skilfully "fixed"; and the *Jewish Merchant*, which is of the same picturesque *facture* as the sketch of the *Concorde du Pays* in the Rotterdam Gallery.

But the *Portrait of a Woman*, of 1666, reveals a more special beauty. This was done three years before Rembrandt's death, and the old master knew better than ever how Nature should be grasped and realised by Art. He dominates his subject with all his knowledge, all his experience, and all his intellect. Thus, this unknown woman, like all the most celebrated effigies, propounds to us the enigma of life. Nevertheless, she is quite simple in bearing and in feature. She has some resemblance to the *Portrait of Hendrickie Stoffels* in the Louvre, but it is supposed that Hendrickie died before 1666, in which case it can only be an accidental similarity. The two women both wear in their ears the same long pendants with large pearls attached. Be it how it may, the woman here depicted would appear to be a comely country-woman with rosy cheeks and big hands, dressed like a prosperous *bourgeoise*, with rings on her little fingers, and hands resting on a big clasped book. Nothing could be more frank than the understanding between the fine black eyes and the full lips, nothing more pleasing than her air of smiling gravity, nothing more beautiful than the luminous gleam of the pink and amber flesh of her face and hands.

I have reserved till the end of the portraits one canvas which is a sketch—that of the *Woman Bathing*—the woman in a chemise entering the water bare-legged. The date of it is 1654, and this time it is assuredly Hendrickie, the *Bathsheba* of the Louvre, who lived with Rembrandt and bore him two children, and who, luckily for him, made a model whereon he was able to show the measure of his genius as a painter of the nude. In the *Woman Bathing* the National Gallery possesses one of his finest studies of the real human body, of flesh firm and full, healthy and brown; and those who, in the name of the academic ideal, have proclaimed it ugly, have indeed misinterpreted that rounded neck, that delicate wrist, that charming hand, and that pretty smiling face which is enjoying the feeling of the water.

Nor is this all. The National Gallery is rich in paintings based on the Old and the New Testament. And there it was that Rembrandt showed the full splendour of his imagination, all the depth of his mind. No one ever combined so well as he the observation of the real with a sense of visionary divination.

To the subject of *Tobias and the Angel* he adds a landscape setting of astonishing reality: mounds of earth, low hills, a little house concealed among the trees at the turn of a road, people walking about, an old peasant seated near a fence, a sombre wood quivering with light; below, a running stream, and above, a grey lowering sky with a vivid brightness on the horizon. Tobias and the Angel are crossing the stream by the ford, stone by stone, and very simply and very forcibly they form part of this humble and mysterious piece of nature.

This keen penetration of the natural scenes amidst which he lived, and his faculty for conceiving, against a familiar background, the biblical figures with which his daily reading brought him into contact, led him to imagine scenes truly grandiose in their large humanity. Certain it is that in the synagogues and the by-streets of the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam (his house was situated there, in the Joden-Brustraat, near the St. Anthony dam) Rembrandt seemed to see working, living, thronging around him the people of Jerusalem who had their share in the events of Christ's life on earth. He saw faces which time had not changed—the rounded profile, the heavy lip, the piercing eye, the heavy beard. He saw too the black eyes of the daughters of the East, the worn and pensive features of the doctors, the eager faces of the merchants, the resignation of the beggars. His forceful imagination stepped in and threw back into the long-past these emotions and these expressions. The crowded market-places, the religious gatherings, the discussions in squares and streets, with their tumult and their violence, indicating as they did the perpetuity of action and of gesture, brought before his eyes the spectacles of bygone days. He clothed the actors in his dramas in the costumes he had collected—costumes which he could see in the plates of his cartoons. With the Roman soldiery he mingled priests in sacerdotal vestments, and turbaned personages armed with scimitars. As for the poor, their rags are always much the same—they do not change, and Rembrandt had little trouble in transposing the aspect of a crowd of seventeenth-century beggars to fit the episodes of the Gospels or the dramatic scenes of the Passion.

He fixes the scene of *The Woman taken in Adultery* within the Temple of Jerusalem, which he pictures as a vast edifice, supported by high columns, and hung with draperies. On an estrade a carved throne, outlined with shells, gleams with its relief of gold. Thereon sits the High Priest, a mild, bearded patriarch surrounded by the faithful. On the steps leading to this platform kneels the woman in charge of a soldier, with breastplate and helmet, who holds the guilty one's veil. Around her crowd faces brutal or sly, with others grave and reserved. Before her stands the Christ, with the strange and beautiful visage Rembrandt so often gives Him—a blending of serenity and mildness, of force and commiseration, an expression which, all judicial as it is, melts into conscient kindness. He looks at the weeping woman, and, looking, He ponders, weighing the probable faults of her accusers. Then He pronounces that clearest of all judgments: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." Soon the crowd will have dispersed, and Jesus will be alone with her who had expected punishment, and now receives unhoped-for aid. A strong light, starting from the left angle of the picture through some invisible opening, slants across the moving scene, falling on the neck of one of the Apostles, on the face and hands of Christ, the features of the priests, the soldier, the spectators, while the whole body of the woman is enveloped in its vivid rays.

Other three episodes in the life of Christ display the extraordinary variety of method and of feeling possessed by Rembrandt.

The Adoration of the Shepherds is marvellous, lighted by a large lantern carried by one of the figures. By means of this light one can distinguish the beams of the stable, the ox and the ass, half hidden in the obscurity, the shadowy forms advancing slowly and in silence, and then the group formed by Mary and the Child all gilded and silvered by the beams arising from out the darkness, while above them is Joseph's anxious face, and the forms of those who are kneeling, or bending over the infant Christ.

Christ before Pilate shows a brutal crowd thronging the courtyard of the palace, around the image of one of the Roman Emperors ; shows the hideous faces of the mob howling " Death ! " the timid, hesitating Governor, ready to commit any cowardice, the soldiery stolid or mocking, and the Victim, crowned with thorns, bound ready for the sacrifice.

In *Christ Descended from the Cross* we have the end of the tragedy—the Victim dead, with eyes revulsed, prostrate, His head resting on the mother's knees, and surrounded by His disciples and friends, while the two thieves still remain nailed to their crosses, and the crowd wends its way back towards Jerusalem.

III. MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

The national Dutch School—the School which filled the seventeenth century with its productions—may be studied at the National Gallery through the medium of its principal representatives. Among the painters I am about to name are some who date from the same period as Rembrandt. He had a great influence not only on those who came after him, but on his contemporaries, and indeed on some of those who were his seniors. Is not this influence visible, for instance, in the paintings of Frans Hals in the Haarlem Gallery, which were done during the second half of his artistic life ?

We may pass swiftly by an example of the School of Rembrandt : *Christ Blessing a Little Child*, and the same course may be taken with regard to the portraits by G. Donck, who " flourished " about 1636, and Jan Lievens (1607–1674). There is a somewhat vulgar " go " about the *Passe-temps musical* by Molenaer (1610–1668), with a certain delicacy about the face of the woman playing the guitar. But now we come to a real master of humorous observation and full-flavoured painting—Adriaan Van Ostade (1610–1685). His *Alchemist* is an ancient, humpbacked elf, who is blowing the fire under a saucepan, which perhaps holds nothing but a stew. But he is surrounded by old volumes, books of magic, damaged

pots, retorts and mortars, littered about in extreme disorder; and Van Ostade succeeds in creating order out of chaos, in clothing all these accessories with life.

After this brilliant *mise-en-scène* the gamblers and drinkers of Hendrik Sorgh (1611–1669) seem commonplace. The *Portrait of a Young Lady* painted by Bartholomeus Van der Helst (1612–1670) is in the laborious, feebly correct and coldly exact style which earned for its author the popularity which had once been Rembrandt's. Gérard Dou (1613–1675) was a pupil of Rembrandt, but evidently he did not grasp the meaning of his master's lessons and example, and one can take no pleasure in the dry details of the shop in the *Marchande de Volailles*, nor the forced expressions on the faces. I prefer the same painter's portrait, in which are certain charming shades of expression, combined with delicate modelling.

Gérard Terborch (1617–1681) was an excellent painter and an observer of delicate intent and apt commentary. How carefully he notes the manners of the characters in *The Guitar Lesson!* The master reads the music from a little copy-book, and beats time with hand extended. The lady-pupil, in yellow satin tunic bordered with ermine, and white satin skirt, fingers the strings with her pretty, plump hand, and practises away with a will. A third figure stands between the other two, he also having his share in the pleasure of the music, and in the agreeable domestic surroundings. This same Terborch is further seen in a *Portrait of a Gentleman*—a figure in a large pointed hat, with a white embroidered band, and all the ceremonial costume of the period—doublet opening over the chemisette, lace-trimmed trunk hose, wide-flounced stockings, square-toed shoes with flowing ribbons, and short mantle. The face is serious and shrewd, the hand well tended. This gorgeous creature might be some lover or consequential person in one of Molière's comedies. And here again we have Terborch as a painter of history—real, visible history—in the *Peace of Munster*, concluded between the ambassadors of Philip IV. of Spain and the Delegates of the United Provinces of Holland on May 15, 1648. The painter has accomplished his task very skilfully, and one cannot but admire the diversity of his human types, and the suppleness of his talent in giving the right characteristics and expressions to the several races.

Interest is attached to a work by Gerrit Lundens (1622–1677). It is a copy, made for Captain Cocq, of Rembrandt's *Ronde de Nuit*, but this copy shows us the original state of the masterpiece, which was pared on the left side in order to make it fit into a wall-space. Furthermore, this copy of the complete work proves that the scene passes in the street, outside the building, and in broad daylight. The title of *Ronde de Nuit*, or "Night Watch," must therefore be abandoned once and for all in favour of *La Sortie de la Compagnie du Capitaine Cocq*.

Brekelenkam (1630–1668) painted scenes showing more observation than this *Interior with Figures*. But Jan Steen (1626–1679), though he

restrains his *verve* somewhat therein, was never more subtle, more "precious," more elegant than in the *Music Master*—a keen-faced man, resting his elbows on a fine harpsichord with painted ornaments and devices, on which a buxom young woman with smooth hair and arched forehead is playing. And how fine the *bourgeois* interior, with its background of tapestry, and its luminous passage! And the beautiful dress, gleaming with frank and sonorous colour—the skirt blue as the cornflower, the bodice yellow as the buttercup! Steen's other picture, *The Terrace*, lacks this clearness of accent, this air of reality. It gives the impression of labour and arrangement.

Gabriel Metsu (1630–1667) reveals all the keenness of his talent, all the delicacy of his modelling, all the harmony of his colouring in *The Duet* and *The Music Lesson*. Again we discover the beauty of the Dutch dwelling; the massive furniture, the floors covered with Oriental carpets, the walls hung with paintings. Here are ladies jocular or tender, clad in pink and in scarlet; here too are jovial music-masters. One of them is screwing up his violin, and the lady is about to sing. Another, during a pause, sips a glass of Rhine wine what time the fair pupil rests in front of her harpsichord.

Two perfect artists are Pieter de Hooch (1630–1677) and Jan Vermeer, otherwise Van der Meer, of Delft (1632–1675). They are ranked among the "little masters," but they are great little masters. In all probability both learnt from Rembrandt. As for Pieter de Hooch it may well be that he was acquainted with the painter of *The Syndics*; but I was thinking rather of *learning* by means of studying his works. Both of these painters came to understand the relief of matter, the unification of luminous effect. Nevertheless, both differ not only from Rembrandt, but also the one from the other.

Pieter de Hooch excels in bringing out the poetry of familiar things. Very ordinary, quite simple, is the setting of this *Courtyard*. In appearance it is just such as one finds on the outskirts of every town: a little stone pavement, a fountain covered by a wooden shed, a stone trough, a few small houses, brick walls, some leafless trees, a plant climbing along a low wall, and a grey sky overhead. A maid-servant is washing a dish. A *bourgeoise* in a black velvet jacket edged with ermine is giving an order of some sort. And through the passage comes a burgess dressed in black, with a white collar. That is all. And here is another *Courtyard*: the back view of a woman, in a corridor; another woman holding a little girl by the hand, on the threshold of a shed. Or take this *Interior of a Dutch House*: an apartment paved with white and black stones, a geographical chart on the wall, and a religious picture over the big fireplace. Two horsemen are seated at table near a window. A woman, seen from behind, and resembling in every way the *bourgeoise* we saw a moment ago in the *Courtyard*, has just poured into a beautiful glass a golden liquor which she is holding up to the light. A maid—clearly the fish-cleaner of the picture already mentioned—carefully bears a brazier

for the smokers. The marvel of all these scenes is the quality of the light in the courtyards, and on bricks, and tiles and walls. By means of this light the constructive force of beings and of things is brought out to the full; the colours meet and play and harmonise in richest combinations—fine blacks and beautiful deep reds, lovely ambered whites, and all the delights of tints logically disposed. Pieter de Hooch was indeed a very great artist, and on his canvases he installed as by magic a series of backgrounds and effects of light which are still admirable even when compared with those of Rembrandt himself. Of course, he had not his incessant touches of genius, or the lively passion which carries all before it as it moves, or that depth of humanity which makes a really great man so brotherly to all who approach him. He painted the scenes he saw and understood, and did not attempt the grandiose and illuminated canvases of the unequalled master. And he did well to show obedience to his nature, and to love the accessible realities around him, thereby he won for himself individuality and lasting fame.

Van der Meer, of Delft, is even more astonishing than Pieter de Hooch, and the National Gallery is lucky to possess a canvas by this surprising artist, who is like no one else, and has a distinction which is quite singular when compared with the *bonhomie*, the jovial humour, the placid *bourgeois* feeling, the vulgar jesting, which are so conspicuous in the pictures of the Dutch School. Beside him even Pieter de Hooch himself is somewhat effaced, and seems rather heavy as regards the expression of his figures and the atmosphere that surrounds them. See this *Young Woman at the Spinet*, dressed in a robe of white satin, with large puffed sleeves, leaving the arms bare, and a blue lace-trimmed fichu thrown negligently over her shoulders. She is standing in front of a spinet, her hands—but half visible—lightly touching the keys. An arm-chair is in the foreground, hiding part of the figure and part of the beautiful white satin skirt, which has a sheen unsurpassed even in the canvases of Terborch or Metsu. But neither Terborch nor Metsu nor any other had the exquisite taste shown in the arrangement of the scene or in the purity of the light coming through the small-paned window behind the player. In the room there is nought but the arm-chair and the spinet, with a couple of pictures on the bare walls. Van der Meer is the master of the bare wall. How solid he makes it! How he coats it with the light of day! In this case the wall makes an admirable background for the figure. His atmosphere is an atmosphere of silver, with a gleam as of pale sunlight—a sort of lunar reflex. What he—like Pieter de Hooch—doubtless learnt from Rembrandt was the knowledge of perspective and of masses; but, like Pieter de Hooch, he used that knowledge in quite a personal manner. He chose his hour, and he chose his figures, and he gave them—as he has given the lady at the spinet—a thoughtful, dreamy expression, clear, pensive eyes, and an enigmatical smile. And one remembers his clean colouring, burnished, by the nudity of his rooms, his bright harmonies, and all his charm of limpidity and of silence.

Nicolas Maes (1632–1693), a more direct pupil of Rembrandt, did not succeed in combining with his imitation of the master a rare individuality such as that of Pieter de Hooch or of Van der Meer. He showed skill in arranging his figures amid the effects of light and shade of which he had learnt the secret, as in *The Idle Servant*, and in the *Card Party*. He too acquired a knowledge of masses, and of the right disposal of a scene. But altogether he does not quite satisfy one's mind, for he always retained something of vulgarity and bombast, and his work emphasises the drawbacks attendant on too literal imitation.

Reference to the Dutch painters of manners may be closed by a bare mention of the names of Van Mieris, Casper Netscher, and Godfried Schalcken. In the case of Frans van Mieris that School kept something of its reality and subtlety, and in that of Godfried Schalcken, something of its luminous effect ; but so far as the last representatives of the National School are concerned painting degenerated rapidly into mannerism combined with feebleness of handling.

IV. LANDSCAPE

A place apart must be reserved for the Dutch landscapists, who were marvellous interpreters of Nature—as true, as observant in their way as the painters of manners. Moreover, they often relieved the scenes they depicted with animated groups of villagers, on work or pleasure bent. Among them were certain great artists who succeeded in expressing themselves by means of river and field, forest and sky.

One of the oldest Dutch landscapists in the National Gallery is Hendrik Averkamp (1585–1663), from whom we have a *Winter Scene*,—a common enough subject—with ice all around, and snow on the roofs, and the bustle of skaters. Poelenburgh (1596–1656) was a painter of the Italian style. Van Goyen (1596–1656) on the other hand was a real initiator ; he really discovered the poetry of Holland, and showed the way to the landscapists of modern times. When one examines the *River*, with the church, the ferry-boat, the tree-shaded houses, and the water luminous as the sky, the connection between Van Goyen and Constable is evident. His *Winter Scene* is full of beauty—the broad stream, the icy clouds, and the people darting hither and thither on skates or in sledges, while a flight of birds passes across the leaden-grey skies.

Jan Wynants (1641–1679) was also a landscapist with an eye for rustic effects—ancient trees, roads with passing flocks or herds, and far-away horizons. Aart van der Neer (1603–1677) was one of the most delightful and most subtle of the Dutch landscapists. He shows us—and we feel an acute sensation of cold—the village in the grip of winter. Everything is frozen—river, and houses, and bridge, and mill and spire ;

and we perceive the little shadows of the village folk half obscured in the frosty air. He painted the twilight hour, too, the hour of peaceful peasant life on summer evenings, when the plough-horses come back to stable, and folk stop to gossip in the lane, and a sense of meditation spreads over all. And he was the moonlight painter, the painter of the dark outlines of houses and boats, of waters lit up, as though with fairy lamps, by the silvery rays of the stars of night.

Jan Both (1610–1652), his real talent for arrangement notwithstanding, strikes one as conventional, after a fine landscapist like Wynants, who was ever seeking and ever discovering the reality of things. Jan Both aimed at the Italian style of landscape—trees, rocks and hills, relieved by muleteers, and shepherds and cattle. Philips de Koninck (1619–1688) tried his hand, and not with success, at Rembrandt's extended landscapes. Nicolas Berchem (1670–1683), like Both, endeavoured to wed style with rusticity. Isaak van Ostade (1621–1649) rightly confined himself to the familiar scenes of Holland—the frozen river, the pull-up at the inn-door, or the group of men and horses.

But here we have Jacob van Ruisdaël (1628–1682), who proves in pictural language most moving, most serene, that grandeur and style are everywhere to be found. The National Gallery contains several landscapes by him: waterfalls, black pine-trees, and rocks with torrents rushing over them. These works naturally follow those of Van Everdingen, and they are supposed to prove that Ruisdaël had travelled in Norway. Other two landscapes there are here which reveal his genius at its full height: the *Beach of Scheveningen*, with its dunes gleaming under bright-coloured clouds, its little groups of promenaders, the incoming of the concentric waves, the fringes of foam left upon the sand, and the broad sky with its clouds rolling across the swelling sea: the *Wooded Plain*, which also is over-set with light vaporous clouds, stretches right away to the horizon, with its streams and forests and harvest fields, and a *point de repère* in the shape of a steeple or a windmill. The velvety painting of the land and the delicate handling of the sky harmonise in one of the most beautiful landscapes in existence—a landscape simple and solemn, forming an admirable theme for meditation.

Adriaen van de Velde (1635–1672) excels in his groups of skaters and golf players on icebound rivers, and in his representations of rustic life. The last of the great landscapists was Meinaert Hobbema (1638–1709), the painter of underwoods and red-roofed houses. From his pictures there springs the odour of the forest, and a beautiful greenish golden light flickers in the glades through the foliage of his sturdy trees. One of his masterpieces, the *Avenue of Middelharnis*, is in the National Gallery. Under a moving sky we see a muddy high road, lined with tall well-trimmed trees; the road winds, and there are houses, a church steeple, a narrow canal, and a garden in which a man is working. In this picture, full of the poetry of the *banlieue*, Hobbema approaches the grandeur and the melancholy of Ruisdaël.

In closing this brief review of the rural landscapists I must pause for a moment to note the flowers, precious as gems, by Van Huysum (1682–1749).

But we have not seen all the Dutch painters of outdoor life. There remain the seascapists: Jan van de Capelle, who worked between 1650 and 1680, had a marvellous gift of representing ships in full sail, boats full of passengers, with big clouds rolling overhead; Ludolf Bakhuizen (1631–1705), not so atmospheric a painter, but likewise a faithful limner of his country's splendid ships; Willem van de Velde (1633–1707), a true poet of the elements, with his *Fresh Breeze*—ships and boats running before the wind amid clouds and waves.

And after the seascapists we have the painters of cities and buildings: Dirck van Delen (1607–1673), who has bequeathed to us a representation of a Renaissance palace, with its porticoes, marble columns and statues; Herman Steenwyck, whose date is unknown, with an *Interior of a Church*; Van der Poel (1621–1664), who painted a *View of Delft* after the explosion of the powder magazine in 1654; Beerstraaten (1622–1666), with his skating scene near a castle; Jan van der Heyden (1637–1712), with a fine architectural view; Gerrit Berck-Heyde (1638–1698) with a very beautiful view of the Square at Haarlem, showing the peristyle of the Hôtel de Ville, the cattle-market, the church and a throng of figures admirably placed and individualised: also the *Interior of a Church*, which gives a true impression of the vast edifice and its congregation.

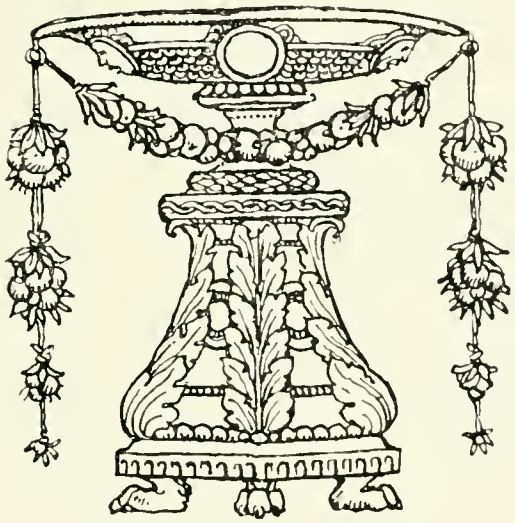
Then again there is the group of animal painters, including some of the greatest and most distinguished artists of Holland. Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668) was the painter of fine spirited horses, neighing and scraping the ground with impatient hoof, and well-seated riders. In his *Interior of a Stable* all is brisk and animated, and the painting nervous and silky. Jan Hackaert (1629–1696) depicts a stag hunt across a marsh fringed by fine trees. Albert Cuyp (1620–1691) is one of the great painters of the group; he is recognisable from among them all by his golden sunset tints, by the somewhat studied, yet grave and moving arrangement of his landscapes, and by the serenity of his animal life, which he invests with all the poetry of the twilight hour.

Such is his *Evening*, with its cattle, sheep, horses and dogs, and its horseman and shepherdess; such too is the *Ruin*, bathed in the light of the golden waters of a lake; and such the *River*, showing a herd of cows and a number of boats under a magnificent cloudy sky, pierced by sunrays; such, finally, is the picture styled *Animals and Figure*, splendidly tranquil and full of character.

Karel du Jardin (1622–1678), meticulous and exact, lacks this high atmospheric poetry. Paulus Potter (1625-1654), another great painter, died quite young, yet he found time to express his love of truth and his patient efforts towards the realisation of his vision. He recounted the story of country life, with its sheep and its cattle, its humble tree-shaded cottages nestling on the hillside, where the harvest lies bound in stacks.

Or, again, he shows us the huntsman resting beside his dog and his horse—a good white horse, wont to career over the downs under the moist sky. Melchior de Hondecoeter (1636–1695) is the painter of the farmyard, with its cocks and hens and chicks.

Here I close my study. The works which have herein been classed and characterised form an imposing group, truly representative of that National School which is the glory of seventeenth-century Holland.



PAINTERS OF THE DUTCH SCHOOL

A LIST OF PAINTERS AND THEIR PICTURES AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY

IN PURSUANCE OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY LOAN ACT, CERTAIN PICTURES HAD, IN 1891, BEEN TEMPORARILY REMOVED. THESE ARE MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK

SCOREL, JAN VAN. 1495–1562.
The Holy Family resting near a Fountain : a repose in Egypt. 720.
Portrait of a Lady. 721.

RAVESTEIJN, JAN ANTHONISZ. 1572–1657.
Portrait of a Lady. 1423.

SAVERY, ROELANDT. 1576–1639.
* Orpheus charming the Beasts. 920.

HALS, FRANS. 1580 or 1581–1666.
Portrait of a Woman. 1021.
Portrait of a Man. 1251.

VLIET, WILLEM VEN DER. 1584–1642.
Portrait of a Jesuit. 1168.

AVERCAMP, HENDRIK VAN. 1585—after 1663.
A Winter Scene. 1346.
A Scene on the Ice. 1479.

POELENBURGH, CORNELIS VAN. 1586–1667.
A Ruin. Women Bathing. 955.

HALS, DIRK. ....–1656.
A merry Party of Cavaliers and Ladies at table. 1074.

HONTHORST, GERARD VAN. 1590–1656.
Peasants warming themselves. 1444.

JORDAENS, JAKOB. 1593–1678.
Portrait of Baron de Linter. 1895.

JANSSENS VAN CEULEN, CORNELIS. 1594–1664 ?
Portrait of Aglonius Voon. 1320.
Portrait of Cornelia Remoens. 1321.

HEDA, WILLEM KLAASZ. 1594—after 1678.
A Study of Still Life. 1469.

GOYEN, JAN JOSEFSZ VAN. 1596–1656.
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A River Scene. 151.
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KEYSER, THOMAS DE. 1596 ?–1667.
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POTTER, PIETER ? 1597–1652.
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ROGHMAN, ROELAND. 1597—living 1686.
* Landscape. 1340.

POT, HENDRIK. Attributed to. Living 1600–1656.
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DUYSTER, WILLEM CORNELISZ. 1599–1635.
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OOST, JACOB VAN (The Elder). 1600 ?–1671.
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The Woman taken in Adultery. 45.
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DELEN DIRCK VAN. 1607 ?–1673 ?

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WOUWERMAN, PHILIPS. 1619–1668.
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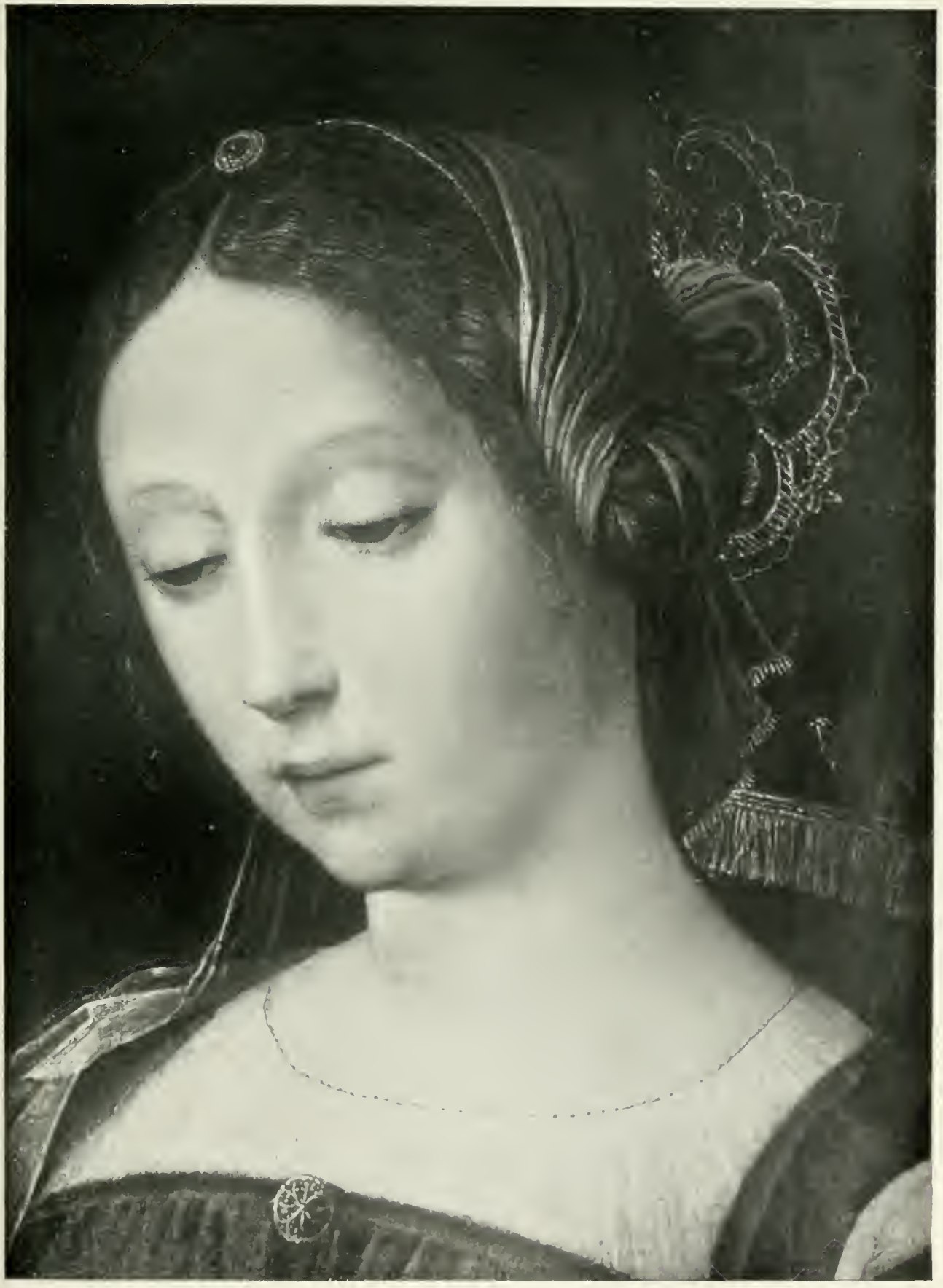

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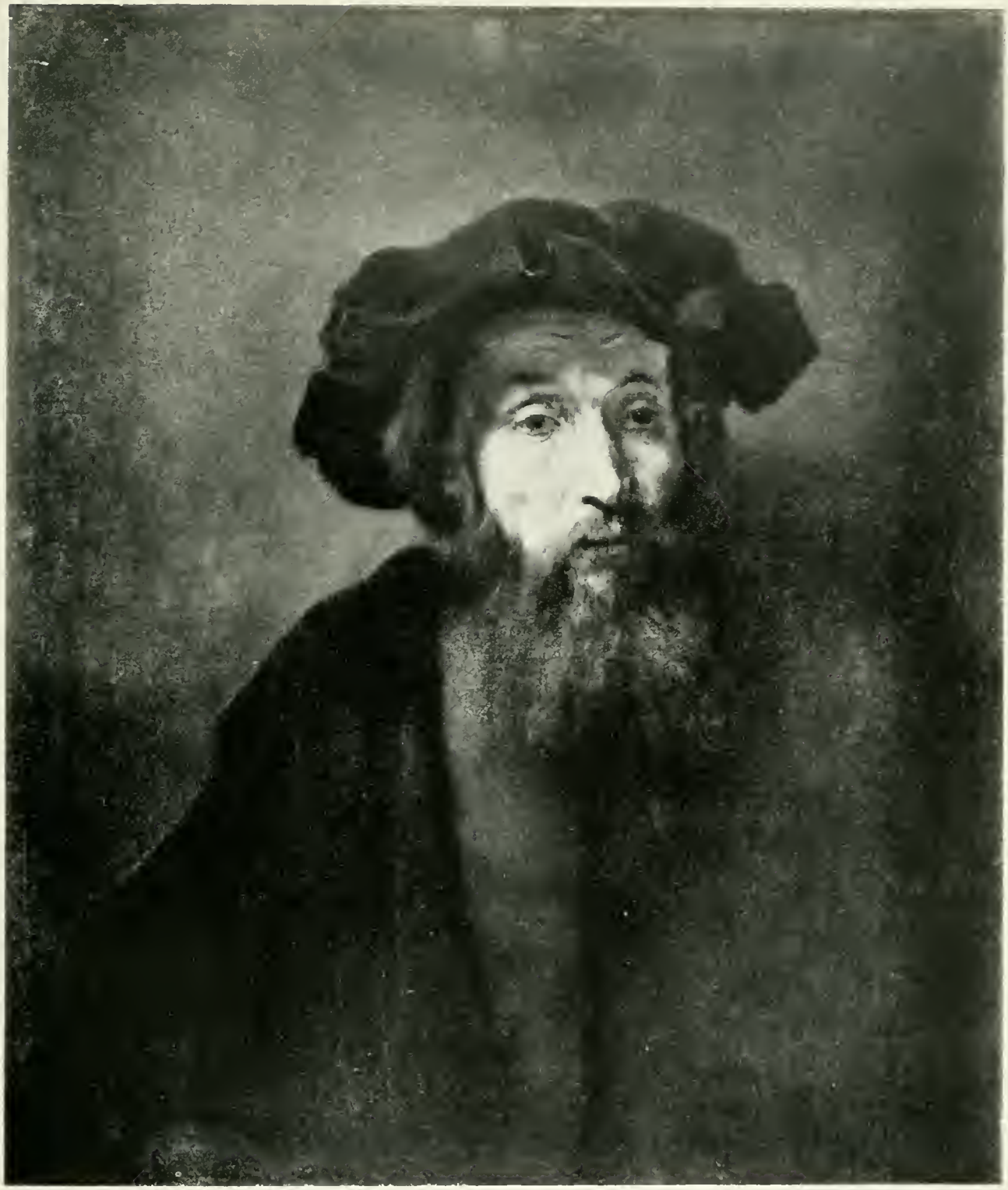

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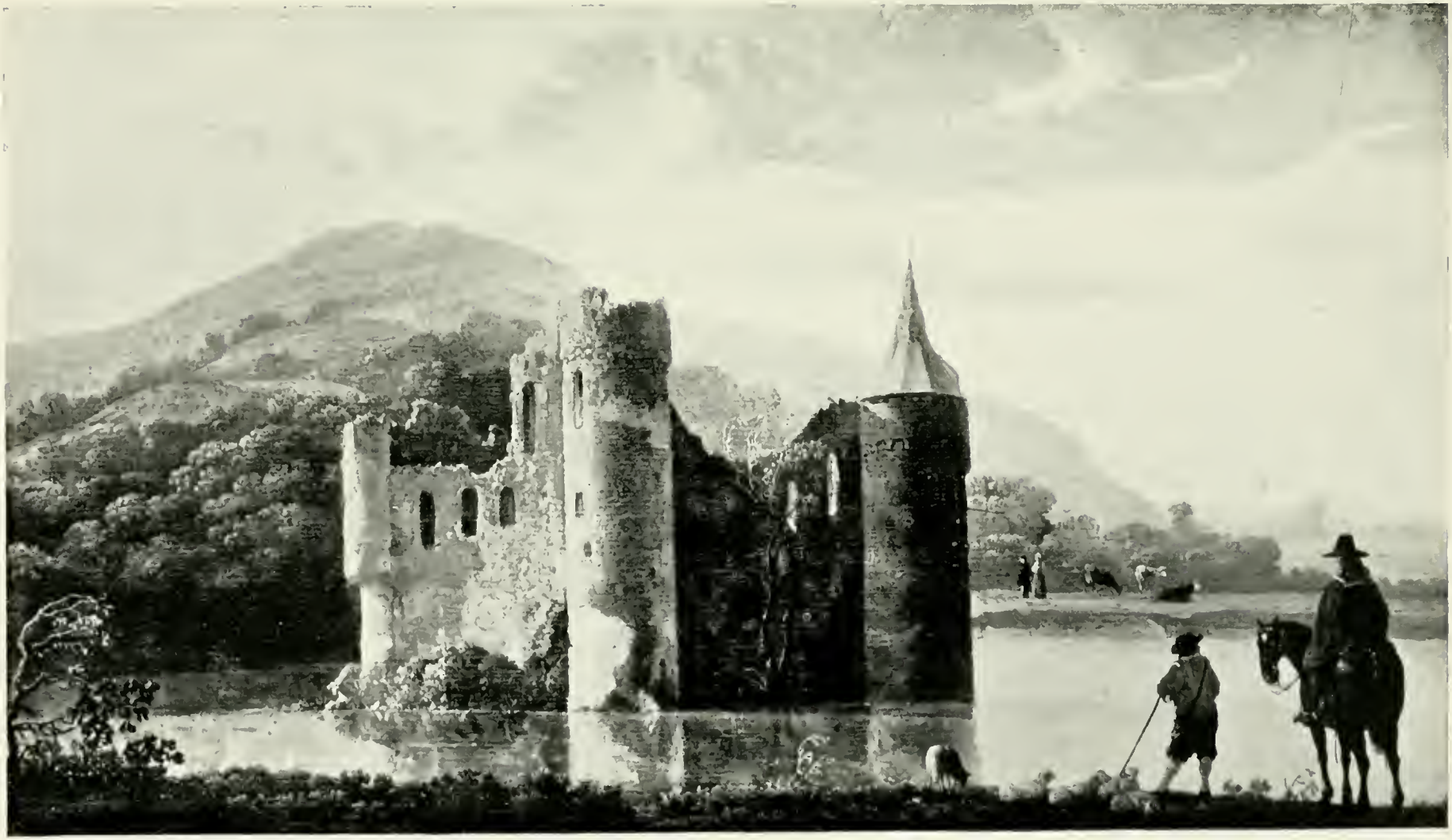

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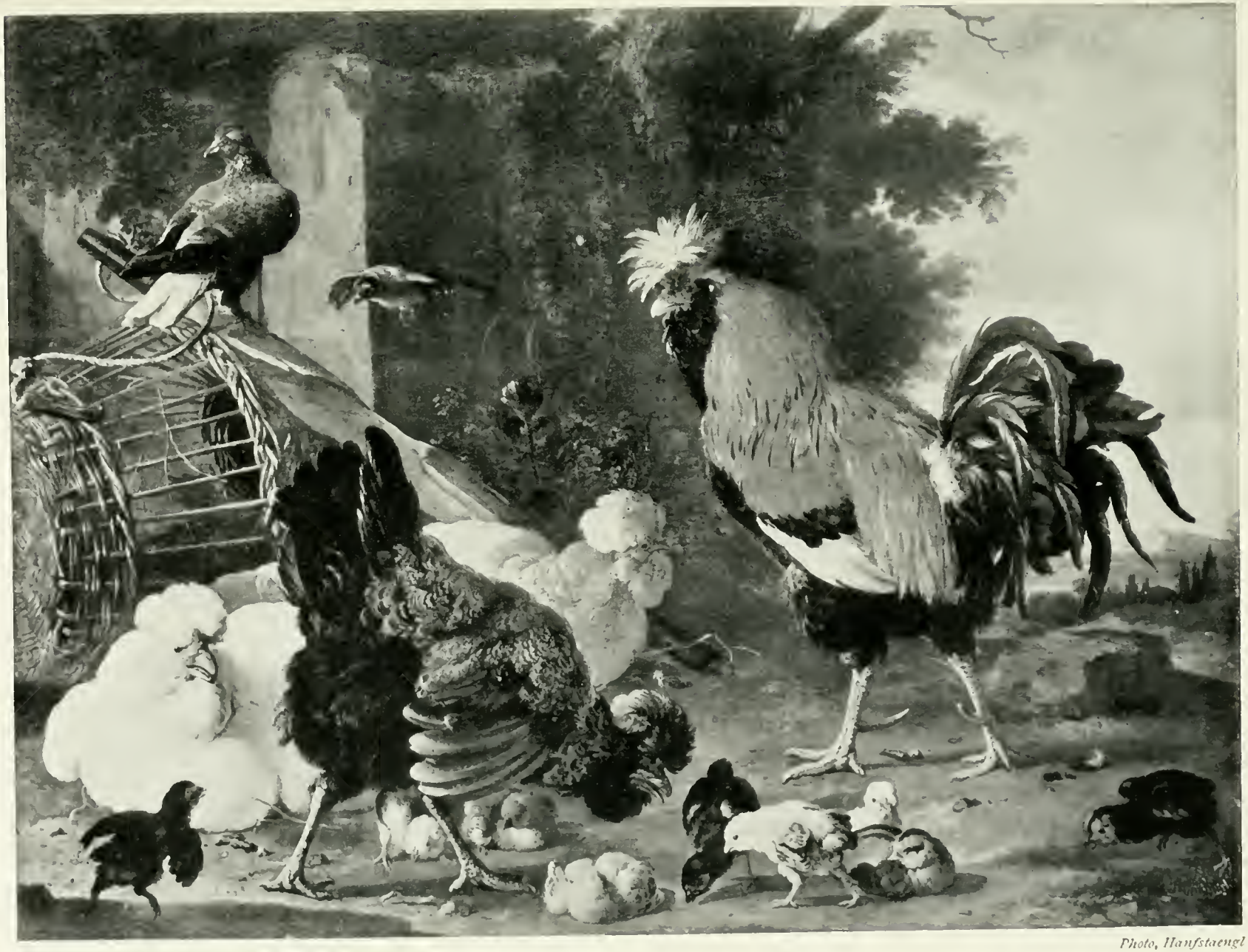

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